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ABSTRACT

The federally mandated welfare program Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) was preceded in Kansas by KANWORK, a pilot effort in four counties designed to initiate job preparedness and esteem-building programs. KANWORK, which was to be mandatory for certain public assistance recipients, included education, job skills training, job readiness activities, job development and placement, supervised and unsupervised job searches, job club, on-the-job training, community work experience, and support services such as child care, transportation, and special financial allowances. Self-esteem enhancement activities have been built into all phases of KANWORK. According to the KANWORK summary report for fiscal year 1989, 3,852 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) clients were screened and, of these, 1,150 individuals were placed in jobs. In Garden City, one of the four KANWORK sites, the program's impact on welfare recipients, Garden City Community College (GCCC), and the local office of Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services (KSRS) has been considerable. At the KSRS, six staff members, including 3 caseworkers with a case load of 150 clients each, were hired to teach job seeking skills, solicit work experience sites, develop an interview clothing bank, and develop life skills management and volunteer mentoring programs. Prior to KANWORK, the Adult Learning Center at GCCC only offered individual tutoring geared for pre-General Educational Development instruction. In less than 3 months, KANWORK clients had swelled the tutoring program to overflowing, necessitating the addition of four classes in basic reading, mathematics, and writing. KANWORK has also referred 240 individuals to GCCC for enrollment in vocational and academic programs. (PAA)

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JOBS, WELFARE, AND LINKS WITH EDUCATION

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JOBS, WELFARE AND LINKS WITH EDUCATION

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The goals of the presentation made at the NYSOD, (The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development) Conference in Austin, Texas, in May 1991 were as follows:

1. To acquaint the participants with JOBS (Jobs Opportunities and Basic Skills), the federally mandated welfare program which should be in place across the United States by October 1991.

2. To describe the impact of JOBS on adult basic education programs, GED tutoring and testing, and college academic and vocational programs in Garden City, Kansas.

3. To identify the elements of success in education and job placement for adults for whom reliance on welfare has become a part of life.

4. To identify barriers to success and some of the strategies to overcome them.

A. Basic Program Design of KanWork

In Kansas, the federal JOBS Program was preceded by KANWORK, a pilot effort in 4 counties designed to initiate a job preparedness and esteem building program which was to be mandatory for all public assistance recipients who met the following criteria:

1. physically and mentally fit
2. 18 years of age or older, but not 60 years of age or older, or a person aged 16 or 17 who is the head of a household
3. a person who's children are at least 3 years of age

The components of the program included education, job skills training, job readiness activities, job development and placement, supervised and unsupervised job searches, job club, on-the-job training, and community work experience.

Support services were also a major focus of the program including child care, transportation, family mentors and a special service allowance. Once a participant is employed, they may access the system for a special employment allowance to cover work related expenses such as transportation, child care and medical coverage as transitional services after the

client has sufficient income to cause ineligibility for cash assistance.

B. Elements Necessary for Success

For a person to succeed he/she must believe they are capable of attaining success. Self-esteem enhancement activities have been built into all phases of the program.

Clients meeting with their case workers develop a self-sufficiency plan which may include all or some of the elements of the program. Some clients are immediately deemed job ready and begin the process of a job search. Others are involved in long term plans that may extend through a four year college degree or concentrate on the development of basic reading and mathematics skills. Work skills must be enhanced and skills honed. Finally then, the opportunity must be extended.

The support services are a vital part of the program. Clients may have transportation, child care or medical card coverage as they make the transition into the work world. For many, medical coverage is a major concern between the time they become employed and the waiting period before an employer's medical coverage may become available. Low paying jobs may become viable options when child care or transportation concerns are alleviated.

C.Results

According to the KANWORK summary report for fiscal year 1989, there were a total of 5,264 AFDC clients registered with KANWORK. Of these 3,852 were actually screened and in FY89, 1,150 individuals were placed in jobs.

Of the 4 sites in Kansas, perhaps the Garden City program has been the most successful. Initial meetings brought together possible service providers and business and industry to become familiar with program goals and support services needed. The effort was made by Kansas Social and Rehabilitation management personnel to publicize and facilitate the program by allowing the community to feel real ownership in the program and its success. The impact of the program on individual welfare recipients, Garden City Community College and the local office of Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services has been enormous.

Research is being conducted to determine the short term and long term affects of JOBS, the federally mandated program designed to provide the training, education, experience and support services necessary to help a welfare recipient get off and stay off of welfare. With prior experience of the state developed KANWORK Program, Kansas is in the third year with rural Western Kansas taking the lead.

The impact of JOBS on higher education and the nation as a whole is yet to be assessed although the process has begun with the Southport Institute in Washington D.C.,the National Alliance of Business, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation and others.

D.Impact on Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services

The decision was made for KSRS in Garden City to take responsibility for several aspects of the program directly. These included: 1 developing a job seeking skills class for those clients who had been deemed job ready. 2. Developing brochures to explain the program and help solicit willing employers and community work experience sites. 3. developing an interview/work clothing bank of used clothing from which clients may select at least two complete outfits suitable for job interviews and work.
4. developing a Life Skills Management program and volunteer mentoring program to assist clients with decision making related to things like money management, child management, self-advocacy, assertiveness and community resources. Other areas of concern are legal rights, personal health, nutrition, coping with crisis and re-entry into education and employment.

Six new staff members were hired to include a director, secretarial support and 3 caseworkers. The client case load per worker has averaged 150. A new KSRS building was put in place to allow for needed office space, meeting and training space for clients and staff.

E.Impact on Garden City Community College Adult Learning Center, Vocational and Academic programs

GCCC Adult Learning Center is the only basic skills development service provider for adults in Garden City. Although greater media attention locally and nationwide seemed to make it easier for individuals to come to the

center and express a need for basic skills training in reading and mathematics, there was not enough demand to provide classes in these areas. Only individual tutoring geared for pre-GED instruction was in place.

The KANWORK Program had an enormous impact on the center. In less than three months of operation, KANWORK clients had swelled the GED tutoring hours to overflowing. Teachers were saying that it was critical to offer basic reading and math classes daytime and evening.

Initially, a large group of clients eager to progress, moved quickly through the Center. Later participants moved through the levels of GED tutoring and testing at a slower pace. Four classes have been added in response to the increase in students referred by KanWork to include the basic reading, mathematics and writing areas.

For Garden City Community College programs, the impact has been great as well. A total of 240 individuals have been referred to the college for enrollment in both vocational and academic curriculum.

The success of the KanWork program is largely due to the willingness of the service providers to work cooperatively in focusing on the needs of the client/student. Problems regarding turf and finances have cropped up but have been resolved.

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